

MVAC leak testing and repair

Does Wisconsin impose a leak test and repair requirement for motor vehicle air conditioning (MVAC) systems? Yes.

Wisconsin law requires that a technician inspects and, if necessary, repairs MVAC or trailer refrigeration equipment that leaks before putting additional refrigerant into these systems.

Is a repair business required to evacuate a motor vehicle air conditioning system upon detection of a leak and a refusal by the customer to proceed with repairs? No.

Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter ATPC 136 states that an MVAC system may not be recharged or “topped off” until leaks have been repaired. However, refrigerant may be added to an MVAC system to test for leaks. If a leak is found and

the customer refuses to authorize repairs, the business is only required to recover the refrigerant that was added to the MVAC system.

In early discussions, consideration was given to requiring repair and servicing establishments to evacuate any MVAC system that was found to be leaking if the customer chose not to commence with repairs. This approach, however, was rejected because of the conflict with Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter ATPC 132, the Department's Motor Vehicle Repair Code.

Very simply, the Motor Vehicle Repair Code (1) requires customer authorization before proceeding with any motor vehicle repairs, and (2) requires a shop to leave the vehicle in the same condition that existed when the customer delivered the vehicle if he or

she refuses to authorize additional repairs.

What options are available to repair businesses when a customer refuses to repair a leaky MVAC system?

Newer refrigerant recovery/recycling equipment provides repair shops with the ability to measure the amount of refrigerant recovered, as well as the amount of refrigerant added to an MVAC system. This equipment makes it simple for repair businesses to recover only that refrigerant which was added to the system to test for leaks.

More often, businesses are unable to recover just the refrigerant added to an MVAC system for leak testing. You may want to discuss your shop policies and procedures, and receive customer authorization before adding

(over)

any refrigerant to the MVAC system for leak testing.

Some repair businesses use commercial weighing devices to estimate the amount of refrigerant recovered from a customer's MVAC system. Other businesses provide a credit on the repair bill for the monetary value of the customer's refrigerant that was recovered but not returned by the shop. The best advice—talk to your customer beforehand.

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